



Return assistance: a change of perspective

Return assistance – in practice

Kosovo¹, Prizren

In fall 2013, Mrs. S and her daughter returned voluntarily to Kosovo. To facilitate her return and support her reintegration, the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) granted her in-kind reintegration assistance for the implementation of a business and housing project in Kosovo.



At their arrival in Pristina, Mrs. S and her daughter were welcomed by representatives of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and escorted to Prizren, their final destination. Mrs. S rapidly found a suitable apartment, and IOM made the payment for several months' rent directly to the apartment owner. Before her departure from Switzerland, Mrs. S was thinking of opening a taxi business or a cyber café. However, after having enquired about the local market conditions, she decided to change her project. With the assistance of IOM counsellors she developed a new business plan

for the packing and delivery of sugar. With the money of the reintegration assistance she could purchase a sugar packing machine and a delivery vehicle.

A few months later, IOM Pristina visited Mrs. S and her daughter. Mrs. S explained that due to health problems and her limited financial means, the management of her project was not always easy. This is why she decided to move to an apartment closer to her parents who could support her with the care of her daughter and the management of her business. The sugar packing and delivery business was developing well. Mrs. S' income was enough to financially support herself, her daughter and her parents partially. Mrs. S was planning to further expand her business and to simultaneously follow a formation.

As a humanitarian and, at the same time, reasonably-priced solution, the concept of Return Assistance has proved itself and gained acceptance in many European countries. The object of Return Assistance is to harmonize the justified interests of migrants with those of Switzerland and the countries of origin. Return Assistance makes a valuable contribution to a sustainable and successful return. It is conceived so as to rule out undesired pull factors in the direction of Switzerland.

¹ Kosovo refers to Kosovo as defined by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.